

Based on Paul P. Enns, [*The Moody Handbook of Theology*](#) (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1989), 349–351

When Jesus stated, “I will build my church” (Matt. 16:18), He was not referring to the local church, but to the universal church, the aggregate number of believers in the present age. A number of figures are used in Scripture to describe or illustrate the church as one living organism. (Enns, p. 349)

#1: Body

a. **Identifies: The head & authority of the Church**

Eph 1:22-23 And He put all *things* under His feet, and gave Him *to be* head over all *things* to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.

Col 1:18 And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence.

b. **Emphasizes: The reconciliation of Jews/Gentiles**

1 Cor 12:13 For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free—and have all been made to drink into one Spirit. (cf. Eph 2:16; 4:4)

c. **Specifies: The leaders & their role in the Church**

Eph 4:11-12 And He Himself gave some *to be* apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, (cf. Eph 4:16; Col 2:19)

d. **Illustrates: The oneness of the Church as a body**

1 Cor 10:16-17 The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we, *though* many, are one bread *and* one body; for we all partake of that one bread.

#2: Bride

a. **Compares: The relationship of husband & wife**

Eph 5:23 For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body.

b. **Reveals: The magnitude of Christ's love for the Church**

Eph 5:2 And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma. (cf. 5:25)

c. **Displays: The exalted position of the Bride**

Eph 5:25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her,

d. **Illustrates: The anticipation of the Groom**

John 14:1-3 Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions; if *it were* not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, *there* you may be also. (cf. 1 Thes 4:16-17)

e. **Illustrates: The glory at & following the wedding**

Rev 19:7-9 Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready.” And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints. Then he said to me, “Write: ‘Blessed *are* those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!’ ” And he said to me, “These are the true sayings of God.”

#3: Building

a. **Prediction: Jesus will build His church**

Mt 16:18 And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.

b. **Foundation: Built on Jesus, apostles & prophets**

Eph 2:20 having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief *cornerstone* (1 Cor 3:10-11)

c. **Unification: Abolished the wall (Jews & Gentiles)** (Eph 2:11-18)

d. **Construction: Fitted together in to one building**

Eph 2:21 in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord,

e. **Addition: Being built up with added stones**

1 Pet 2:5 you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

#4: Priesthood

- a. **Holy: In standing and in action** (1 Pet 2:5)
- b. **Active: Offering up spiritual, proper sacrifices** (1 Pet 2:5)
- c. **Royal: His own, proclaiming His praises**

1 Pet 2:9 But you *are* a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;

- d. **Privileged: Direct, open access to God**

Heb 4:14-16 Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast *our* confession. For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all *points* tempted as *we are*, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

#5: Flock

- a. **Led by the Shepherd (& His Shepherds)**

Jn 10:27 My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me.

- b. **Loved Sacrificially by the Shepherd & Shepherds**

Jn 10:11 I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep. (10:15)

- c. **Protected by the Shepherd (& His Shepherds)**

Acts 20:28-30 Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves.

- d. **Purchased by the Shepherd**

1 Pet 5:2 Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly; (cf Acts 20:28)

- e. **Cared for by the Shepherd (& His Shepherds)**

John 21:15-17 So when they had eaten breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, *son* of Jonah, do you love Me more than these?" He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You." He said to him, "Feed My lambs." He said to him again a second time, "Simon, *son* of Jonah, do you love Me?" He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You." He said to him, "Tend My sheep." He said to him the third time, "Simon, *son* of Jonah, do you love Me?" Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, "Do you love Me?" And he said to Him, "Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You." Jesus said to him, "Feed My sheep.

#6: Branches

- a. **The Vine: Jesus**

- b. **The Vinedresser: God, the Father**

John 15:1 I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser.

- c. **The Vine's Purpose: Life-Giver & Fruit-Enabler**

Jn 15:5 I am the vine, you *are* the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.

- d. **The Branches' Purpose: To Bear Much Fruit**

Jn 15:8 By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples.

- e. **The Vinedresser's Purpose: Pruning for Fruitfulness**

Jn 15:2 Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away [or "raises up"]; and every *branch* that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit.

Heb 12:5-11 And you have forgotten the exhortation which speaks to you as to sons: "*My son, do not despise the chastening of the Lord, Nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him; For whom the Lord loves He chastens, And scourges every son whom He receives.*" If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom a father does not chasten? But if you are without chastening, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate and not sons. Furthermore, we have had human fathers who corrected *us*, and we paid *them* respect. Shall we not much more readily be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live? For they indeed for a few days chastened *us* as seemed *best* to them, but He for *our* profit, that *we* may be partakers of His holiness. Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.